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IT IS SET UPON THIS CRAGGY ASTEROID...

CAN WE M-M-MAKE IT THE BEST TWO OUT OF THREE?

FAILURES! UTTER FAILURES ALL!

WE CLOTHE YOU IN THE KINGLY ROBES OF *POWER*... AND YOU RETURN TO US IN THE DISMAL TATTERS OF DEFEAT! WE FORGE FOR YOU THE SWORDS OF *CONQUEST*... AND YOU HAVE NAUGHT TO SHOW BUT THE SHARDS OF *SUBJUGATION*!

WELL? WHAT *PLEA* CAN YOU *COBBLE* UP IN YOUR *DEFENSE*?

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HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD OF *PROFITING* FROM ONE'S MISTAKES?

WE'VE LEARNED FROM *OURS! GIVE* US THE POWER ONCE MORE! WE'LL SHOW THOSE--

ENOUGH! IF WE DECIDE TO INVEST YOU WITH POWER ONCE AGAIN... WE WILL DO SO *DESPITE* YOUR *SNIVELING!*

FOR THE MOMENT... *BEHOLD! ONE* AMONG YOUR NUMBER EXHIBITS SIGNS OF *COMPETENCE!*

WE HAVE ENTRUSTED *BRAINIAC* WITH THE POWER TO STIR LONG-DEAD *RACIAL MEMORIES!* WHEN HE STRIKES WITH IT AGAINST WONDER WOMAN'S HOMELAND OF PARADISE ISLAND.. HER PEOPLE WILL DE-EVOLVE ... MAKING THEM *HOSTILE... AGGRESSIVE ... MALEVOLENT...*

THE WORLD WILL QUAKE... BEFORE...

"AMAZONS

"AT WAR"

Jack Kirby	PLOT
Joey Cavalieri	SCRIPT
Adrian Gonzales	PENCILS
Alan Kupperberg	INKS
Ben Oda	LETTERER
Carl Gafford	COLORIST
Andrew Helfer	EDITOR

THIS IS THE DREAM OF EVERY RESEARCHER...

THE ULTIMATE CONTROL EXPERIMENT!

I WILL BE ABLE TO WATCH AND RECORD DATA... AS WAR HYSTERIA GRIPS A ONCE-PEACEFUL CIVILIZATION...

THEN... FOLLOW THE PATH OF THAT CIVILIZATION... AS IT CONQUERS NATION AFTER NATION... SPREADING HOSTILITY AND HATRED...

...IN THE SAME MANNER AS A VICIOUS DISEASE SPREADS THROUGH A FORMERLY HEALTHY BODY!

HOW TRULY WONDROUS IS MY NEWLY GAINED POWER! IT IS EVERYTHING MY BENEFACTOR SAID IT WOULD BE!

MOST AMAZING IS ITS TRANSCENDENT ABILITY TO PIERCE THE VEIL THAT SEPARATES THE PLACE CALLED PARADISE ISLAND FROM THE REST OF HUMANITY!

4

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

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"ALL OVER THE ISLAND, THE AMAZONS WILL SENSE... EACH IN THEIR OWN WAY... THIS NEW CLARION CALL TO ARMS!

"ONE BY ONE, THEY WILL ABANDON THEIR NOBLE PURSUITS...

"THE ONLY STUDY WILL BE THE STUDY OF WAR.

"SCHOLARLY TRACTS WILL BE REPLACED BY DISSERTATIONS OF STRATEGY. KNOWLEDGE WILL BE AUGMENTED BY CUNNING!

"THEY WILL PUT DOWN PLOW-SHARES... TO PICK UP SWORDS!

"THEY SHALL MARCH TO THE BEAT OF A NEW DRUM...

"...ONE THAT RESOUNDS IN A SINGLE-MINDED CADENCE: YOU MUST MARCH! YOU MUST FIGHT! YOU MUST DIE!"

NOW TO GIVE THE AMAZONS THE *RATIONALE* FOR BATTLE... A CAUSE CÉLÈBRE FOR THEM TO RALLY BEHIND!

A *REASON* FOR THEM TO *SPILL BLOOD!*

MY OWN POWERS ENABLE ME TO TAP INTO THE SYSTEM OF ANY COMPUTER ON THIS PLANET!

I WILL PENETRATE THE COMPUTER OF A SECRET NUCLEAR WEAPONS FACTORY... SITUATED ON AN ISLAND CLOSE TO WHERE PARADISE ISLAND *WOULD* BE... IF THEY OCCUPIED THE SAME DIMENSIONAL PLANE.

IT WILL BE A SIMPLE TASK TO *MISDIRECT* THE COMPUTER-RUN FACILITY...

"... BEGINNING A NUCLEAR REACTION...

THE SAFETY OVERRIDE'S NOT RESPONDING TO MY CONTROLS! IT'S GOING TO *BLOW!*

DON'T WASTE ANY MORE TIME! WE'VE GOT TO GET TO A *SHELTER!*

"... A REACTION POWERFUL ENOUGH TO REND THE DIMENSIONAL FABRIC THAT HIDES PARADISE ISLAND FROM THE WORLD!

"THE AMAZONS WILL INTERPRET THIS AS AN ATTACK FROM MAN'S WORLD! IT WILL BE THEIR RATIONALE... THEIR EXCUSE TO ATTACK!"

WHRAAMMM

AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME...

I RECEIVED A GARBLED TRANSMISSION ON MY MENTAL RADIO!

FROM WHAT I COULD PIECE TOGETHER ON MY OWN, SOMETHING MUST BE HORRIBLY WRONG ON PARADISE ISLAND! BUT--I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT!

THIS CONFIRMS IT!

EVERYONE DOWN THERE SEEMS TO BE ANXIOUSLY AWAITING MY ARRIVAL! BUT... WHY?

SISTERS! I HAVE RETURNED!

WHY HAVE YOU SUMMONED ME BACK TO--

UNNGGH!

WHAPP!

ALL ARMS AGAINST HER! SHE IS BUT ONE WOMAN!

MERCIFUL MINERVA! THEY'VE ALL GONE *INSANE* WITH WARLUST! I'VE GOT TO CALM THEM DOWN!

HOLD, SISTERS! THIS IS *NOT* THE WAY OF THE AMAZONS!

IT IS *NOW*, DAUGHTER!

MOTHER?

YES, DIANA, IT IS I -- AND IF YOU WILL NOT FIGHT ALONGSIDE PARADISE ISLAND'S FIERCEST GLADIATORS, YOU WILL FIGHT *AGAINST* THEM!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- I--

TAKE HER!

NOOOOOO--

BUT AS THE AMAZONS PILE ONTO WONDER WOMAN, HER RELUCTANCE TO FIGHT HER SISTERS FADES--AS AN UNKNOWN FORCE SEEMS TO FILL HER WITH A FERVOR-- A FERVOR FOR BATTLE!

STAND *BACK!*

YOU ARE--*NONE* OF YOU--MY *EQUAL* ON THE BATTLEFIELD... AND YOU NEVER *WILL* BE!

IF *AMAZONS* WILL ONCE MORE TAKE UP ARMS... IT SHALL BE *ME* WHO LEADS THEM!

FOR DOES NOT AMAZON BLOOD COURSE THROUGH *MY* VEINS?

AM I NOT... ONE OF *YOU?*

MEANWHILE, ABOARD THE JLA SATELLITE...

ONCE IS HAPPENSTANCE... TWICE IS COINCIDENCE...

BUT THREE SEPARATE CASES OF VILLAINS WIELDING FANTASTIC POWER THEY'VE NEVER HAD BEFORE--

--IT MUST BE THE WORK OF SOME FAR GREATER OUTSIDE FORCE!

I'M INCLINED TO AGREE, GENTLEMEN...

...AND THAT MEANS OUR WORK IS CUT OUT FOR US!

RIGHT! WE'VE GOT TO FIND THAT FORCE'S POINT OF ORIGIN!

I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT...BUT SOME KIND OF STRANGE CHILL WENT THROUGH ME AFTER WE DEFEATED THE PENGUIN.

IT SEEMED TO HANG IN THE AIR LIKE AN OMNIPRESENT AURA.

I FELT IT, TOO... NOT ONLY AFTER MY BATTLE WITH LUTHOR... BUT AFTER OUR TANGLE WITH THE JOKER!

WE'LL HAVE TO FIGURE WHAT THAT'S ALL ABOUT LATER.

ACCORDING TO THE TELETEXT MAP, AN INSURGENCY FORCE IS TAKING OVER THE ISLAND OF SAN MARCOS...

AN EARLY REPORT CLAIMS THE FORCE IS COMPRISED ENTIRELY... OF WOMEN!

SAN MARCOS? ISN'T THAT CLOSE TO WHERE PARADISE ISLAND... ER... WOULD BE, IF IT EXISTED IN THIS CONTINUUM?

YOU'RE NOT SUGGESTING--

--THAT THE INSURGENT ARMY IS THE AMAZONS? THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I'M SUGGESTING. I FURTHER SUGGEST WE MAKE OUR WAY THERE WITH ALL DUE SPEED.

ROBIN, YOU'VE GOT MONITOR DUTY. KEEP US POSTED OF ANY... NEW INCIDENTS.

I READ YOU, BATMAN.

AND THAT'S IT. THE TRANSMATTERS TAKEN THEM BACK TO EARTH... AND I'M STUCK HERE ... 22,300 MILES AWAY FROM THE NEAREST BURGER KING!

OH, WELL. GUESS I'LL GET INTO A GAME OF DIG-DUG!

SAN MARCOS... THE PORT CALLED "LOS BRAVOS"...

IT WAS NAMED FOR "THE BRAVE ONES" WHO DIED DEFENDING THIS ISLAND FROM INVADERS... IT'S SEEN MANY A DARING CAMPAIGN... MANY A BOLD MANEUVER...

BUT IT'S NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

PING

CHOW

TAT TAT

TAT TAT

KRAK

PRESS ON!

LET NO WOMAN AMONG YOU SHAME HER AMAZON HERITAGE!

SANTA MARIA! THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS OF THEM SPILLING ONTO THE BEACH!

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS ULTIMATE OUTRAGE FROM MAN'S WORLD!

YOUR MISERABLE TECHNOLOGY HAS FOUND A WAY TO FOUL OUR ISLE... AS WE KNEW IT SOMEDAY WOULD!

YOU WISH TO TINKER WITH SOURCES OF POWER? WITH WEAPONS OF WAR? WITH FORCES MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU CAN EVER UNDERSTAND?

WE WILL SHOW YOU THE PRICE!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

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THEY WILL NOT ADVANCE! NOT AS LONG AS WE HAVE THE HIGHER GROUND!

OPEN FIRE!

NO! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

IT CAN'T BE! EVEN HEAVEN IS AGAINST US!

NOT... NOT HEAVEN... BUT...

...HELL!

"NO HEAVEN COULD CONTAIN... SUCH MADNESS AS THIS!"

ONWARD! FOLLOW ME TO THE PALACE OF EL PRESIDENTE DE SAN MARCOS!

ONCE HE CAPITULATES, THE ISLAND IS OURS... AND WE HAVE TAKEN OUR FIRST STEP--

--TO AMERICA!

NO SOONER SAID...

PUT YOUR MILITARY CAMPAIGN ASIDE, EL PRESIDENTE!

INSTEAD... DRAFT YOUR RESIGNATION!

YOU'RE ONLY LUCKY WE HAVE NEED OF YOU, OR WE'D RUN YOU THROUGH RIGHT NOW!

YOUR ISLAND'S MISSILE BASE!

IT NEEDS A PASSWORD TO BECOME OPERATIONAL! MY SOLDIERS ARE THERE NOW... READY TO BEGIN OUR ONSLAUGHT AGAINST AMERICA!

GIVE ME THAT PASSWORD...NOW!

I... CANNOT!

HE DEFIES THE MAGIC LASSO! HOW CAN IT BE?

HE CANNOT TELL ME WHAT HE DOESN'T KNOW! THIS MAN IS AN IMPOSTOR!

TELL ME WHERE THE REAL PRESIDENT IS! AT ONCE!

THERE IS NO NEED FOR HIM TO DO SO! HERE IS THE REAL PRESIDENT...

I WILL GIVE YOU THE PASSWORD! SPARE MY LIFE!

I'M GETTING THE ALL-CLEAR SIGNAL!

PREPARE TO DIVE!

READY TO LAND? LET ME HELP YOU...

ONCE I TAKE CARE OF THIS SHIP, I'LL DEAL WITH THE OTHER,

FROM HERE--

--IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO DROP ANCHOR-- IN A BIG WAY!

SPLOOSH

... BY CLIPPING YOUR WINGS!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

MEANWHILE...

The oft-quoted homily goes something like so: "Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door."

Yeah, well...

I'm not big for mousetraps and I certainly don't want people beating a path to my door, and destroying the lawn that I've invested a tiny sum to get to grow.

But I **am** big for comics...have been for thirty/forty years and I want to "build" better comics. I have a vision, remember. A vision of comics being all that they can be. I still don't know if that vision will ever come to pass, but I do know that if it does, it will not be because we chose to walk in the footsteps of others. We must (and will) go our own way, occasionally making mistakes, occasionally being rewarded by great triumphs, but each step leading, hopefully, ultimately, to the realization of that vision.

Fine so far, neat words. Do those words have substance? Does **DC** really have a long-term plan that can turn neat words into reality? Fair questions. They deserve answers. My answers to those questions are yes and yes. And I will spend some time in this column amplifying those answers both today and in future columns.

Okay—

First of all, don't be frightened by the phrase "long-term." You won't have to wait till you're old and gray. Fact is, we've already started and there are "short-term" results. We have made or planned changes in four areas that will have a short- **and** long-term positive effect on our comics.

1) **Staff:** If you read this column regularly, you're already aware of the fact that there are some new faces around here. We let them introduce themselves to you, and I'm sure you noticed that though they all had publishing backgrounds, none of them were specifically comic publishing backgrounds. As a matter of fact, they were chosen for their editorial skills and because they were not dyed-in-the-wool comic people dedicated to maintaining a status quo, did not have a notion of there being only one "right way" of producing comics. In short, they're open-minded, skillful, inquisitive, and intelligent and those attitudes could naturally lead to their being experimental and innovative. Not one of them would say "we can't do that because it's never been done successfully before." Of course, we'll use the same criteria for choosing future staff members.

2) **Printing techniques:** It's easy to say "we take the time to do it right." It's easy for us to say that because it's true. We also spend a considerable amount of money to "do it right." We use the most appropriate production and printing techniques and we monitor the results constantly. We order expensive 3M or Chromalyn proofs from our separators (on all our deluxe format titles) to correct and insure that the finished product will be what we had envisioned. We also send qualified people to the printers to check and correct the first copies off the press before the full print run begins. Frank Miller and Lynn Varley (the color artist on **RONIN**) have been to press when each issue of **RONIN** was to be printed. As a matter of fact, I'm writing this column in my bedroom in a lodge that **World Color** (our major printer) maintains for visiting clients in Sparta, Illinois. Bob Rozakis (who is sleeping in the next bedroom) and I are here to check the printing of **THE NEW TEEN TITANS** #1—the first regularly published offset, deluxe format title being printed for us by World Color, who of course prints all of our letterpress books. All this is currently **SOP** and we hope that the end result of this tender loving care will be better books at the lowest possible cost to you (to be continued).

Thank you and Good Afternoon.

Dick

SPOTLIGHT ON...GREEN LANTERN

"I'm sorry, Dick, I just can't do it," I all but shouted, an unnatural note of panic in my voice.

"Don't be ridiculous, Len," replied Dick Giordano, Executive Editor, all-around nice guy, and currently the major source of my torment. "Of course you can do it. You're a professional, aren't you? You've been writing in this business for sixteen years. How hard could it possibly be for you to write me a simple little promo piece about your work on the new **Green Lantern**?"

"But I don't know where to start," I pleaded. "I don't know what to say."

"Well, then, talk about how much fun you and Dave Gibbons are having on the book," Dick suggested, a note of pity growing in his voice.

"But that's obvious," I whined. "Anybody looking at Dave's pencil-and-ink work on the book can tell at a glance how much effort he's putting into his work. And my scripts are trying very hard to match that level of quality."

"Yeah...that's true enough," Dick conceded. "Well, then, why don't you just tell all about your plans to revamp the book?"

"You mean, like how Hal Jordan is going to actually **resign** from the Green Lantern Corps, to lead a normal life?" I asked.

"Yeah...like that," Dick smiled, the smile of a man who has just explained Quantum Physics to a chimpanzee.

"Gee, then I can tell everybody that Hal's **replacement** as Green Lantern will be—"

"Whoa, fella," said Dick, almost rising to his feet. "You don't really want to give away a shocker like that before they read the issue, do you?"

"No, I guess not," I replied, a little crestfallen. "Then why don't I tell them about **The Image**, and how he'll be the most offbeat new super-hero since **Brother Power, The Geek?**"

"Will you please be serious," Dick scowled.

"Sheesh, everybody's a critic," I sulked. "I guess, since this is a promo for **Green Lantern**, I can't tell the readers all about my plans for **The Image**, right? How he may develop into the regular back-up strip in GL? How he'll show up in **DC Presents?** How, if reader reaction is strong enough, he might even graduate into—dare I say it?—his very own book?"

"Nope," said Dick. "Not a word."

"Spoilsport. Well, if I can't tell them about that, can I tell them about all the new thrills, surprises, and unexpected twists and turns coming their way in the **new Green Lantern**?"

"I think you already have," sighed Dick, understandably.

"Well, when Dave and I took over this book, we promised everyone the **new** Green Lantern was coming—and you know how we hate to go back on our word."

"You know," said Dick, shaking his head sadly, "I'm beginning to think this column wasn't such a great idea after all."

I left him there, sobbing softly into the towering stack of books and papers growing like Topsy on his desk.

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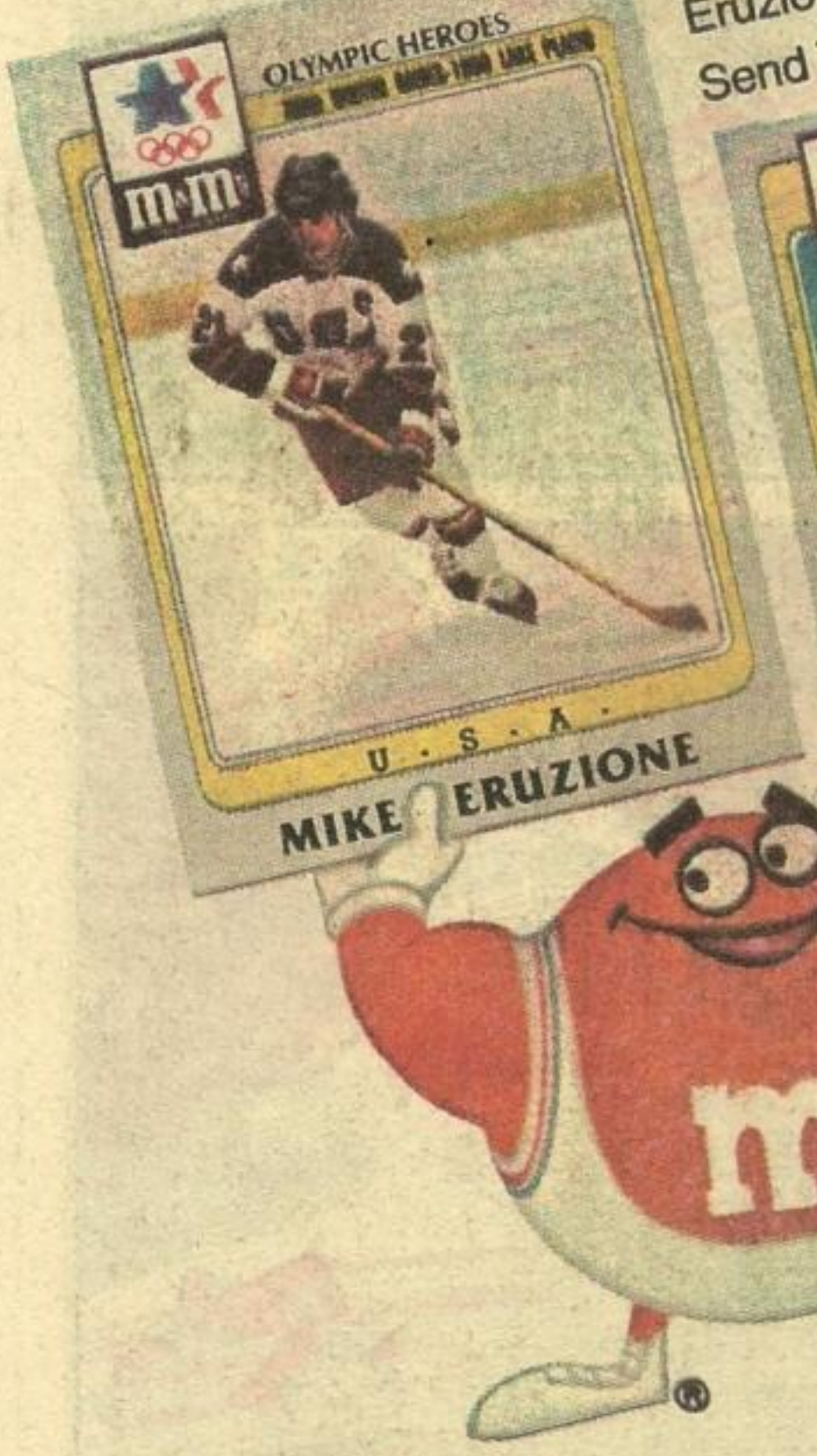

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THE FASTER I RUN, THE HIGHER THIS WHIRLPOOL OF WATER WILL TAKE YOU--

-- BACK THROUGH THE DIMENSIONAL RIFT THE EXPLOSION AT THE NUKE PLANT CREATED!

BEATS ME WHY YOU'D WANT TO LEAVE AN ISLAND CALLED "PARADISE" IN THE FIRST PLACE!

TAKE IT EASY! I'M NOT BUILT FOR SUDDEN LANDINGS!

IS THAT A COMPLAINT? WHY ARE YOU CALLED "BATMAN" IF YOU CAN'T EVEN FLY?

THE NAME "OSTRICHMAN" DIDN'T STRIKE FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF EVILDOERS!

DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS SUCH A THING AS SUPER-HERO TEST-MARKETING!

WE'RE ABOUT TO GET ALL THE TESTING WE CAN HANDLE!

MEN! DESTROY THEM!

IF WE'RE TESTING ONE MEDIEVAL WEAPON AGAINST ANOTHER... MY MACE WILL WIN OVER THEIR SWORDS ANY DAY.

I PREFER MORE MODERN MEANS OF STOPPING THEM... KNOCKOUT GAS FROM MY UTILITY BELT!

PROSAIC... BUT EFFECTIVE!

THAT WAS TOO EASY! IT ALMOST TAKES THE FUN OUT OF HIGH ADVENTURE!

WHERE TO NOW?

WHERE ELSE? THE SPOT THAT'S RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR WAR PATH...

"SAN MARCOS' MISSILE BASE!"

THE MISSILES ARE *RAISED* FROM THEIR SILOS... AND READY FOR LAUNCHING-

GOOD! PUNCH IN THE *MESSAGE AUTHENTICATOR...*

...AND *FIRE!*

THE PASSWORD IS --

"A SANGRE FRIA-

THEY'VE FIRED THE MISSILES... AND THIS ISLAND'S ONLY A *HEART-BEAT AWAY* FROM *AMERICA!*

HOW *COULD* THEY BE SO *BLOODTHIRSTY?*

SNAGGED 'EM!

NOW TO HAVE MY RING *DEFUSE* THEM!

OHHHHHH NO! THEY'VE SENT UP A *SECOND SALVO!*

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CONTINUED ON 2 ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

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BUT, WATCHING FROM THE OCEAN BELOW...

I WAS SUPPOSED TO WAIT *HERE*... IN *RESERVE* ...IN CASE THE SITUATION BECAME TOO DIFFICULT TO HANDLE!

THIS SITUATION QUALIFIES!

GREEN LANTERN WILL *NEVER* HAVE TIME TO DEFUSE ALL THE MISSILES THEY CAN *LAUNCH!*

HE COULD TRY TO CUT THE MISSILES OFF AT THE *SOURCE* WITH HIS RING... BUT THEY'D LAUNCH ANOTHER DEADLY BARRAGE WHILE HE MADE THE ATTEMPT.

SO IT'S UP TO *ME*.

I'VE HEARD TELL... OF A CREATURE THAT *SLUMBERS* IN THIS AREA... HE HASN'T BEEN STIRRED... IN *CENTURIES!*

I'LL HAVE TO SUMMON HIM *NOW*... BUT IT WILL TAKE... ALL THE CONCENTRATION I'VE *GOT!*

I'VE *SUCCEEDED!* HE'S ONLY *NOW* BEGINNING TO SURFACE!

FEW HAVE HEARD OF THIS CREATURE... AND FEWER STILL BELIEVE HE *EXISTS!* BUT THE *OLDEN SEAFARERS* KNEW!

THEY LIKENED HIM TO A *GOD*.., AND CALLED HIM...

LEVIATHAN!!

AS THE BEAST REACHES SAN MARCOS, AQUAMAN TELEPATHICALLY GUIDES ITS ACTIONS.

FORGET ABOUT THE AMAZONS! YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED IN THEM! LET THEM RUN!

IT'S THE *MISSILES* YOU WANT! *CRUSH* THEM! *DESTROY* THEM!

EEEEEEEK! IT'LL *CRUSH* US!

STAND AND FIGHT! *FIGHT!*

YOU ARE *AMAZONS!* AMAZONS MUST *CONQUER* AND *RULE!* ARE YOU AFRAID OF A LIZARD?

IT'S *WONDER WOMAN!* SHE'S *ARRIVED!* I CAN'T ALLOW THE CREATURE TO HARM HER--GOT TO CALL IT OFF!

LEVIATHAN! RETURN! RETURN TO YOUR SLUMBER! RETURN!

IT'S *DEPARTING!* IT'S JUST SOME BIG, STUPID *SALAMANDER!*

WONDER WOMAN! HOW DID *SHE* GET HERE?

AMAZONS... FALL IN! WE WILL *REGROUP* AND THEN... IT'S *ON* TO *AMERICA!*

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? SHE'S NOT ON *OUR SIDE!*

SPEAKING OF "OUR SIDE," WHERE'S SUPERMAN, YOU ASK?

CAN'T JOIN THE OTHERS... UNTIL *THIS* MENACE IS TAKEN CARE OF!

THE CONTAMINATED WRECKAGE OF THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS FACTORY IS EMITTING DANGEROUSLY HIGH LEVELS OF RADIATION!

ONE GOOD BLAST OF SUPER-COLD SUPER-BREATH...

...SHOULD SLOW *DOWN* THE SPREAD OF THE RADIATION... UNTIL I CAN *DISPOSE* OF THIS PLACE *PROPERLY!*

ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR ME TO FLY INTO THE *SHELTERS* AND *EVACUATE* THE *WORKERS!*

I CAN NOW SEE THE *ERROR* IN MY *PROGRAM!*

I HAVE *WASTED* MY NEWFOUND POWER ON WONDER WOMAN AND HER BAND OF AMAZONS!

I WILL *RESCIND HOLD* ON THEM! INSTEAD, I WILL USE MY *DE-EVOLUTIONARY POWER* TO DESTROY THE *HATED ONE...*

MY *ENEMY*... THE *EXTERMINATING ANGEL!*

---THE ONE WHO CALLS HIMSELF... SUPERMAN!

AND THROUGH HIM... DESTROY HIS WORLD!

"HE WILL DE-EVOLVE... BACK TO A TIME BEFORE HIS RACE TREAD THE PATH OF SCIENCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT...

"BACK INTO THE MURKINESS OF KRYPTON'S PRE-HISTORY! HE WILL NO LONGER BE SUPERMAN, THE MAN OF STEEL. INSTEAD, HE WILL BECOME --

"SUPERMAN... THE BARBARIAN!"

HIS COMPATRIOTS WILL NOT KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF HIM WHEN THEY ENCOUNTER HIM IN THIS FORM!

THEY WILL FEAR HIM... THEY WILL TURN AGAINST HIM...

THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO DESTROY HIM... OR HE MAY DESTROY THEM!

EITHER WAY, BRAINIAC TRIUMPHS!

BACK ON SAN MARCOS...

THAT'S A POOR EXCUSE FOR THE CARNAGE WE'VE WITNESSED TODAY!

I'M NOT TRYING TO EXCUSE IT, BATMAN! THIS ISN'T AN ALIBI!

I'M TELLING YOU...WE HAD NO IDEA WHAT CAME OVER US!

IT'S AS IF WE WERE IN THE GRIP OF SOME KIND OF SPELL... SOME FORCE GREATER THAN WE COULD IMAGINE! SOMETHING HELD US... BID US FORWARD... BUT WHAT... I CAN'T SAY!

THIS IS BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE A FAMILIAR TUNE!

IN THE LAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS... WE'VE ALL SEEN EVIDENCE OF SOME GREAT FORCE... NOT UNLIKE WHAT YOU'RE DESCRIBING.

IT'S THE SAME EACH TIME! AN UNCANNY AMOUNT OF POWER IS SUDDENLY INVESTED IN--

LOOK! UP IN THE SKY! IT'S A BIRD!

IT'S A PLANE!

NO... IT'S...

GNARRRRRGHHH!

GREAT GUARDIANS! WHAT IS THAT THING? AND WHAT HAS IT DONE WITH SUPERMAN?

FOR ALL WE KNOW... FROM WHAT WE'VE SEEN SO FAR... THAT COULD BE SUPERMAN!

WHATEVER IT IS... IT'S A THREAT!

ONE WE'LL HAVE TO--

GUNNNN-NAARRRGHHH!

--UHH! PICKED ME UP... JUST PLUCKED ME OUT OF NOWHERE... AS IF I WERE STANDING STILL!

MUNNNNNN-GAHHHHHH!

WHAT, AND BREAK UP A TEAM?

WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK IN THE BATTLE... BEFORE THAT... PERSON KNOCKS THE FIGHT OUT OF THE REST OF US!

WHOOOOOOO! I'M A... A GONER!

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NO MATTER *HOW* BEASTLY HE IS... HE'LL BECOME *DOCILE*...

...ONCE I ENSNARE HIM IN MY *MAGIC LASSO!*

HE -- HE CAUGHT IT!

AND *NOW*... HE'S *CAUGHT* ME!

EEEE

YIEEE

HE'S SENT HER *SOARING*... AND NOW... HE'S TURNING HIS ATTENTION TO *ME!*

IF THE OTHERS COULDN'T STAND AGAINST HIM... WHAT CHANCE HAVE I?

WHAT CHANCE INDEED? HAS BRAINIAC'S PLAN SUCCEEDED? WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE DARK EMISSARIES? GET THE ANSWERS... AND MORE QUESTIONS... WHEN YOU BUY SUPER POWERS #4!

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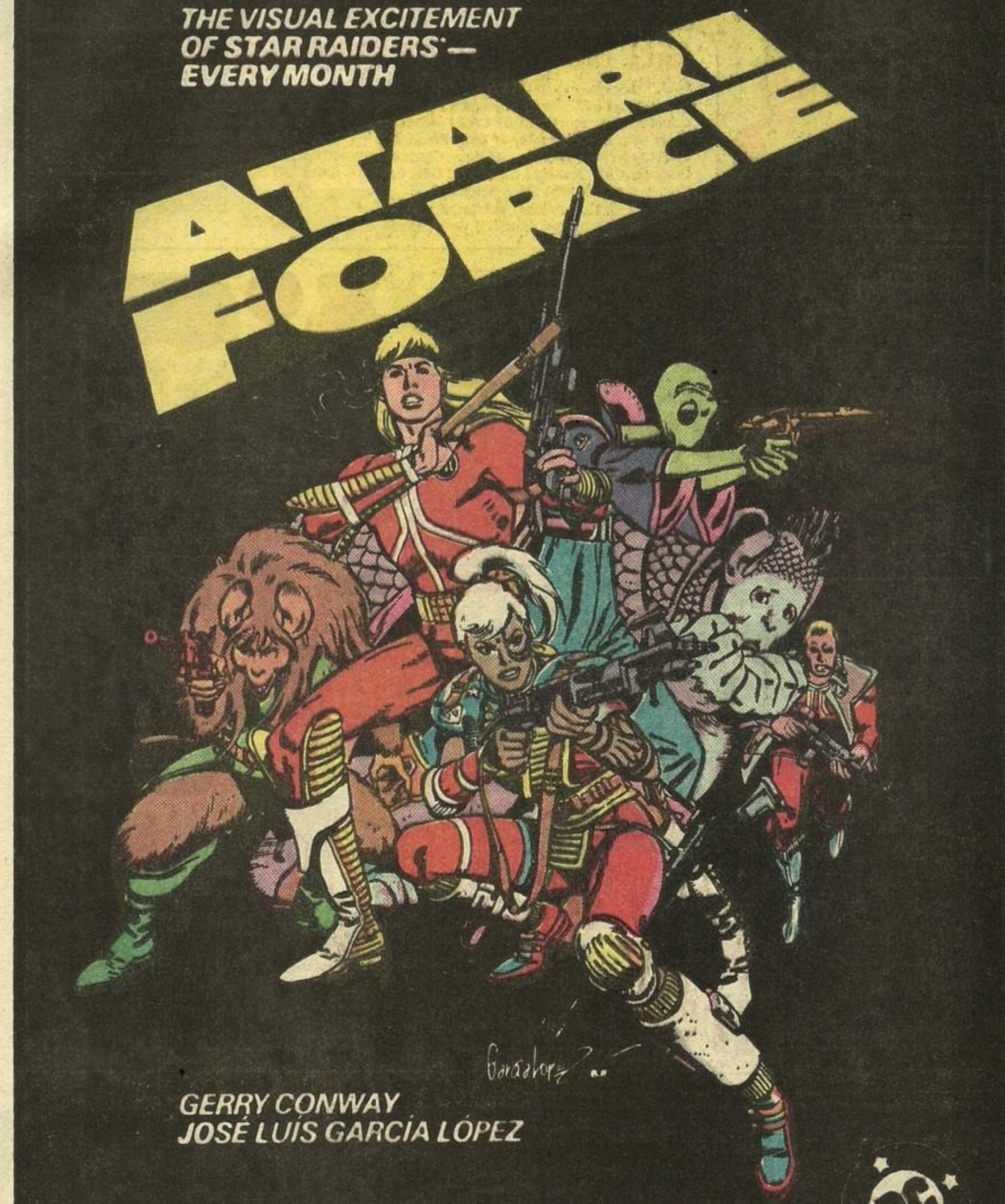

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